

200765 - Is it permissible to call a child Binyameen?

the question

Is it permissible for Muslims to give their children the name Binyameen? Or the names of any of the brothers of the Prophet Yoosuf?

Detailed answer

With regard to giving a child the name Binyameen (English form, Benjamin) and the like, it is permissible in principle, and there is nothing in the name itself to suggest that it is not allowed to call a child by this name.

But in terms of what is customary, the Jews are the ones who use this name, and it is not regarded as being a Muslim custom to give one's child this name, so it is disallowed to use this name for that reason.

Among the companions of the Messiah (peace be upon him) were people called Matta (Matthew), Yuhanna (John) and so on, but undoubtedly these are not names used by Muslims nowadays. Therefore the scholars disallowed calling one's children by these names.

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Names fall into three categories:

1.
names that are used only by the Muslims
2.
names that are used only by the disbelievers

3.

names that are common to both groups.

The first category includes names such as Muhammad, Ahmad, Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmaan, 'Ali, Talhah and az-Zubayr. They - i.e., ahl adh-dhimmah - should not be allowed to use these names.

The second category includes names such as Jurjus (George), Butrus (Peter), Yuhanna (John), Matta (Matthew) and the like. They should not be prevented from using these names, but it is not permissible for the Muslims to use these names, because that would entail resembling them in that which is unique to them.

The third category includes names such as Yahya (John), 'Eesa (Jesus), Ayyoob (Job), Dawood (David), Sulaymaan (Solomon), Zayd, 'Amr, 'Abdullah, 'Atiyyah, Mawhoob, Salaam, and so on. These names are not disallowed for either ahl adh-dhimmah or Muslims.

End quote from Ahkaam Ahl adh-Dhimmah (3/1317)

The scholars of the Standing Committee were asked:

We are a group of young people who are religiously committed, praise be to Allah. We work together in the same place, and we also live together in the same place, and when we are messing about we call one another by names that are not our real names, such as Jurjus (George), Butrus (Peter), Yuhanna (John), Mikhaa'eel (Michael) and Binyameen (Benjamin). Is that haraam? Please note that we do not call each other by these names except by way of messing about.

They replied:

Doing that is not permissible, because it comes under the heading of resembling the disbelievers in their names, and the Prophet

(blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever imitates a people is one of them.” So what you must do is avoid calling one another by these foreign names, even if that is by way of joking.

End quote from Fataawa al-Lajnah ad-Daa’imah (26/32)

The names of the brothers of Yoosuf are, as was stated by al-Qurtubi (may Allah have mercy on him): Rubeel (Reuben), who was the eldest of them, Sham’oon (Simeon), Laawi (Levi), Yahoodha (Judah), Zayaaloon (Zebulon), Yashjir (Issachar), Daan (Dan), Naftaali (Naphtali), Jaad (Gad), Aashir (Asher) and Binyaameen (Benjamin).

Tafseer al-Qurtubi

(9/130)

Calling one’s sons by these names is also not allowed, because these are foreign names and it is not customary among the Muslims to call their children by these names.

Yes, in the answer to question no.

[193364](#), we stated that calling one’s children by the names of the Prophets comes under the heading of names that are liked and encouraged, and some of the scholars are of the view that the brothers of Yoosuf (peace be upon him) were also Prophets, but the more correct view is that they were not Prophets. Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

It should be noted that there is no proof to suggest that the brothers of Yoosuf were Prophets.

End quote from Tafseer Ibn Katheer (4/319)

As-Suyooti (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

There are two scholarly opinions with regard to the brothers of Yoosuf (peace be upon him). The view of the majority of earlier and later scholars is that they were not Prophets.

End quote from al-Haawi li'l-Fataawi (1/367)

To sum up:

Calling one's child Binyaameen or calling him by the names of the brothers of Yoosuf is disallowed, for the reasons mentioned above. There are enough Muslim names so that one has no need to call one's children by these names.

Please see the answer to question no. [1692](#) for information on names that are mustahabb (encouraged), makrooh (disliked) and haraam (forbidden).

Please see the answer to question no. [7180](#) for information on the etiquette of naming children.

And Allah knows best.